

HERE AND THERE (CONTINUED)

The Lafayette Squadron

Flight into Hell: The Story of the Lafayette Escadrille. By Edwin C. Parsons. (John Long, 8s. 6d.)

THE Lafayette Escadrille was a squadron of the French Army Air Service during the Great War. It was composed of American volunteer pilots. The C.O. and second-in-command were French officers, and the mechanics were French. The squadron served in the French Army from April, 1916, to February, 1918, when it was taken over by the American Army, and for practical purposes lost its peculiar individuality.

During its service in the French Army thirty-eight American pilots were, from first to last, on its active roster. Of these, nine were killed, one invalided out with wounds, and one taken prisoner. During the same period the squadron scored fifty-seven officially confirmed victories, though doubtless many more German machines were shot down too far behind the enemy lines for official confirmation to be possible.

If these figures seem small compared with the bag of No. 56 Squadron (for example), which arrived in France in April, 1917, and between that date and the Armistice shot down 427 enemy aircraft (officially confirmed), it should

be remembered that the crack British squadron had had many more pilots on its books from first to last, and that its forty-four dead alone outnumbered the total number of pilots who served in the Lafayette. Also, the rules for confirmation were rather stricter in the French than in the British Service.

This book is a breezily told history of the Lafayette Escadrille by one of the Americans who served in it. There are many thrilling stories of air combats, and also intimate pen-pictures of several of the more notable of its pilots. Best known is Raoul Lufbery, who was a fighter pilot of great skill and courage. The Americans seem to have had very crude ideas of discipline, but they fought hard. It was their ideal to repay to France some of the debt which America owed to the Marquis de Lafayette during their War of Independence, and in this they succeeded. This book is sure to be popular.

THE NEWEST ROLLS-ROYCE: First views of the Rolls-Royce Peregrine engine, which has the capacity of a Kestrel (21.3 litres) and is rated at 830/860 h.p. at 13,500ft. in its Mk. I and Mk. II forms. Maximum power figures have not yet been issued. It will be noted that this engine, unlike the Kestrel series, has a down-draught carburettor. It would make an admirable power plant for installation in high-speed twin-engined fighters or bombers.

